FACT SHEET

EPA Region 7

Newton County Mine Tailings Superfund Site
Newton County, Missouri August 2001

INTRODUCTION

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has completed a study of the Newton County Mine Tailings Site in Newton County, Missouri. The study, an Engineering Evaluation/Cost Analysis, or EE/CA, addresses lead contamination in the yards at the site. The EE/CA looks at different ways to take care of the lead contamination. Based on the study, EPA recommends the following:

- Address those yards contaminated with more than 400 parts per million lead.
- Excavate the contaminated soil from the yard.
- Fill the excavated areas with clean top soil.

The public is invited to comment on this recommendation and others presented in the EE/CA.

Public Comment Period Announcement

EPA is currently asking for comments on the Engineering Evaluation/Cost Analysis for the Newton County Mine Tailings Site. The 30-day comment period runs from August 15, 2001, through September 14, 2001.

Written comments (post-marked by September 14, 2001) can be sent to:

Hattie Thomas, EPA
Office of External Programs
901 N. 5th Street
Kansas City, Kansas 66101
e-mail: thomas.hattie@epa.gov
1-800-223-0425

If requested, EPA will hold an information session, during the comment period, to discuss the cleanup activities in more detail. Please direct your requests to Ms. Thomas, listed above.

SITE BACKGROUND

The Newton County Mine Tailings site is in the extreme southwest corner of Missouri. The site is part of the Tri-State Mining District that covers approximately 2,500 square miles in northeast Oklahoma, southeast Kansas, and southwest Missouri.

The Tri-State District was one of the major lead-zinc mining areas in the world. Lead and zinc were continuously mined from 1850 until 1970. Most of the Missouri mining was done underground.

Mining, milling, and smelting wastes were usually left on top of the ground. These wastes include development rock, chat, sands, fine tailings, and slag. Additionally, ore smelting was done in Granby, Missouri from the early 1850s through the 1920s. Several small smelters were also located along Shoal Creek in the northwest portion of the County. The mine wastes and smelter activities have contributed to soil and water contamination throughout parts of Newton County.

HEALTH EFFECTS

EPA found lead contamination at the site at levels that may pose a risk to human health and the environment. People can be exposed to lead by breathing or swallowing lead contaminated soil or dust. Lead can damage the nervous system, kidneys, and reproductive system. Children are more sensitive to lead than adults and may develop permanent learning disabilities as a result of lead exposure.

ENGINEERING EVALUATION/COST ANALYSIS

EPA has looked at alternatives to address the site contamination. When EPA looks at alternatives, we take into account the effectiveness, cost, implementability, and other factors. We looked at the following alternatives for the Newton County Mine Tailings site.

- No Action – We are required to consider a no action response under federal regulations. This alternative does not address the potential risks from the contamination at the site.

- In-Place Containment – A permanent physical cover is placed on the contaminated soil to reduce exposure. Typical covers include soil, asphalt or concrete. Although covers have been effective in reducing exposure, they may be lost, or damaged over time. They also limit residents from being able to use their yards in a normal manner.

- In-Place Stabilization – This alternative includes immobilizing the metal contaminants in the soils, on site. This is done by mixing chemical stabilizing agents into the soil. To date this is not a proven technology.

- Treatment – The treatment alternative includes ways to reduce the toxicity, mobility, or volume of contaminants in the soils. The treatments may include soil flushing or soil washing. These treatments are considered innovative, and unproven over the long term.

- Excavation and On-Site or Off-Site Disposal – Excavating and disposing of the contaminated soil removes the contamination source. Replacing the excavated materials with clean soils prevents continued exposure to the metals of concern. This is a proven technology and has been used effectively at several Tri-State District sites.

EPA'S PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

EPA's preferred alternative for the Newton County Mine Tailings Site is excavation and disposal. All residential yards with a yard soil average greater than 400 parts per million lead will be excavated to a maximum depth of 12 inches. The excavated soil will be disposed of at the soil repository, south of Granby. Excavated soil will be replaced with clean topsoil, and the yards graded to the original grade, then seeded.

This alternative meets the requirements for overall protection of human health and the environment. EPA will review all of the public comments and make a final decision, after the comment period closes.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

An Administrative Record File consisting of site-related documents, including the EE/CA, has been prepared for the Newton County Mine Tailings site and is available for public review. The Administrative Record File can be viewed at the following locations:

Granby City Hall	U.S. EPA Region 7
302 N. Main	Superfund Records Center
Granby, Missouri	901 N. 5th Street
	Kansas City, Kansas

If you have questions about this fact sheet or need additional information about this site, please contact:

Hattie Thomas, Community Involvement Coordinator
U.S. EPA Region 7
Office of External Programs
901 North 5th Street
Kansas City, Kansas 66101
(913) 551-7003 or toll free at 1-800-223-0425
E-mail: thomas.hattie@epa.gov

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